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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003477

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IECI MEETS WITH ADNAN DULAIMI AND OTHER SUNNI LEADERS

REF: BAGHDAD 3442

Classified By: PolCouns Robert Ford reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. At an Embassy-facilitated, August 23 meeting with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), Sunni Conference Chairman Adnan Dulaimi pressed for more voter registration centers in Al-Anbar and an extension of the voter registration period. Sunni Constitution Committee representative Hasseb Arif complained that Al-Anbar sites are too few in number and located too far away for many residents. The Sunni and IECI representatives agreed that more outreach by government and political entities is needed to educate the public. They further agreed to form a joint working committee to improve coordination between IECI and Sunnis. On August 24, UN Electoral Operations Chief David Avery indicated that the UN may provide some funding to Sunni outreach initiatives, and predicted that the IECI will extend the Al-Anbar voter registration period by one week. Most Sunni Arab leaders distrust IECI and worry about unfairness in upcoming elections. Embassy organized this meeting as a means to encourage Sunni Arab leaders and IECI to begin talking with each other. End Summary.

2. (C) Further to reftel, Embassy Baghdad arranged a meeting for Sunni Conference Chairman Dulaimi and TNA Constitution Committee Member Arif with IECI commissioners to discuss Sunni voter registration concerns. Accompanying Dulaimi and Arif were Sunni Conference Spokesman Mohammed Abbass, Anwar Al-Lahebi, and Imad Mohammad Ali. All of the IECI commissioners attended, except for Commissioner Safwat who was reportedly ill, as did UN Electoral Operations Chief David Avery.

3. (C) Dulaimi and Arif pressed the IECI commissioners for more voter registration centers (VRCs) in Sunni areas. They further asked for an extension of the voter registration period due to delays in opening VRCs. Arif claimed that for two weeks no registration centers had been available in Al-Anbar, and that only a few of the 28 planned registration centers are now open. Arif said people have complained of political bias at some centers, and asked for impartial observers to monitor registration sites. In Kirkuk, for example, Arif alleged that Iraqi Police guarding some centers have been obstructive, telling certain residents that the centers were closed when they were actually open. Abbas added that there is insufficient public outreach on voter registration, especially in Al-Anbar. Dulaimi requested funding assistance from the IECI and UN. Dulaimi said he planned to expand his outreach and soon visit Diyala to meet with tribal leaders there. Finally, the Sunni representatives and IECI commissioners recognized that more outreach by government and political entities was needed to better educate the public, and agreed to form a joint working committee to improve coordination between IECI and Sunnis.

4. (C) Subsequent to the meeting, UN Electoral Operations Chief Avery told Poloff on August 24 that the UN may provide some funding to Sunni outreach initiatives, and predicted that the IECI will extend the Al-Anbar voter registration period by one week.

5. (C) Comment: Most Sunni Arab leaders distrust IECI and worry that the next elections will be unfair. We organized the August 23 meeting to get Sunni Arab leaders (most of whom had had no contact with the IECI) to talk directly with the commissioners. To further encourage dialogue, Embassy is working with USMC in Al-Anbar to arrange an IECI visit to the province for discussions with local leaders about voter registration and elections. End Comment.

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